

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 SAN JO 04398 132118Z

70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 NIC-01

/154 W

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P 132016Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5758

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

S E C R E T SAN JOSE 4398

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CS

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER REASSURES GOCR

DOES NOT SUSPECT US IN COUP PLOT

REF: SAN JOSE 4392

1. I CALLED PERSONALLY ON FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO
LATE AFTERNOON DECEMBER 12 TO CALL HIS ATTENTION
TO THE LA HORA STORY QUOTING MINISTER OF PRESIDENCY
SOLORZANO AS IMPLYING POSSIBLE US INVOLVEMENT
IN ALLEGED COUP PLOTTING (REFTEL). I SAID THAT
I WAS DISTURBED AND SURPRISED THAT A CABINET
MINISTER WOULD SAY AND IMPLY SUCH THINGS AND
I ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION AND WHETHER THE
MINISTER'S REMARKS REFLECTED THE GOCR'S VIEWS.
FACIO SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN THE STORY AND I
HANDED HIM A COPY OF THE PAPER DULY MARKED.
HE WAS VISIBLY ANNOYED AND CALLED THE STORIES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAN JO 04398 132118Z

AND ALL THE RECENT PLAY ABOUT A PLOT "COMIC
OPERA". HE SAID I WAS PERFECTLY CORRECT

IN BEING DISTURBED AND IN ASKING FOR AN EXPLANATION. HE COULD SAY TO ME THAT THE GOCR WAS NOT SUGGESTING THAT THE US WAS INVOLVED. HE SAID FURTHER THAT HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY TALK TO MINISTER SOLORZANO AND THE PRESIDENT.

2. I POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT I WAS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED THAT THE STORY APPEARED IN LA HORA WHICH HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY AS AN ADMINISTRATION ORGAN. I ASKED HIM TO PLEASE CONVEY TO THE PRESIDENT THE DEPTH OF MY CONCERN AT SOLORZANO'S COMMENT AND TO ASSURE THE PRESIDENT THAT THE USG WAS IN NO WAY INVOLVED IN OR CONDONED ANY KIND OF PLOTTING AGAINST CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY.

3. THE MINISTER CALLED ME THIS MORNING TO SAY HE HAD TALKED TO SOLORZANO WHO WAS CHAGRINED AT THE STORY AND WHO DENIED THAT HE HAD SAID WHAT HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING. FACIO SAID THAT WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT IN SOLORZANO'S WEEKLY MEETING WITH THE PRESS, REPORTERS ASKED HIM ABOUT THE COUP, AND THE TASS CORRESPONDENT ASKED IF THE CIA WERE BEHIND IT. SOLORZANO IN WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE SARCASM AND TO TURN THE QUESTION AROUND SAID HE DID NOT KNOW IF IT WAS THE CIA OR THE KGB. LA HORA PLAYED THE COMMENT STRAIGHT AND EMBROIDERED OTHER THINGS HE DID NOT INTEND TO SAY. HE SAID SOLORZANO WOULD ISSUE A CLARIFICATION. I THANKED THE MINISTER AND SAID I APPRECIATED THE EXPLANATION. THE MINISTER AGAIN SAID I WAS PERFECTEDLY CORRECT IN BEING DISTURBED. HE SAID HE WAS ON HIS WAY NOW TO SPEAK TO DON PEPE, AND WAS IN FACT GOING TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT LA HORA GENERALLY. HE THOUGHT SOMEONE SHOULD WATCH THAT PAPER MORE CAREFULLY AND HE QUOTED SOME UNFLATTERING EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT-ELECT, CARLOS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAN JO 04398 132118Z

ANDRES PEREZ, WHICH HE SAID HE KNEW DON PEPE WOULD DISAGREE WITH. SINCE MANY PEOPLE BELIEVED LA HORA WAS SEMI-OFFICIAL ("WHICH IT ISN'T", HE SAID) SOMEONE SHOULD CHECK THE EDITORIAL LINE MORE CAREFULLY.

4. A FEW MINUTES LATER SOLORZANO CALLED ME PERSONALLY TO APOLOGIZE AND REPEATED THAT HE HAD BEEN MISQUOTED AND MISINTERPRETED, AND HE DID NOT KNOW WHY LA HORA PRINTED IT THAT WAY. HE

SAID HE WOULD BE ISSUING A RECTIFICATION
TODAY.

5. COMMENT: I DO NOT KNOW HOW "MISQUOTED"
SOLORZANO REALLY WAS; HE IS NOT OUR GREATEST
SUPPORTER. I DO BELIEVE THAT MY DEMARCHE WAS
SALUTARY AND THAT IT WILL SLOW UP THE KIND OF
FREE-WHELLING SPECULATION AND INNUENDO THAT
FREQUENTLY COMES OUT OF CIRCLES IN THE CASA
PRESIDENCIAL.
VAKY

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